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Department of State

7/27/79

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INCOMING

TELEGRAM

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INFO OCT-01 10-14 ADS-00 CIAE-00 CODE-00 PM-05 M-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1704
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6150

E.O. 12055: KDS-1 7-27-79 (CHAPLIN, MAXWELL) OR-G
TAGS SHUN, AR
SUBJECT (U) PERIODIC HUMAN RIGHTS TRENDS REPORTING

REF: STATE 78829; B BUENOS AIRES 4338

1. ENTIRE TEXT)

2. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. WE SEE CONTINUED SLOW IMPROVEMENT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRONT, AND THE ENIGMATIC AND SINISTER FORCES AT WORK HERE HAVE BEEN FURTHER REDUCED OR CONTROLLED. HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITY TO THE WHOLE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AND ITS EFFECTS WORLDWIDE CONTRIBUTED TO ARGENTINA'S DECISION TO ADMIT 5,000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES INTO THE COUNTRY. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

3. WE HAVE RECEIVED ONE "TEMPORARY DISAPPEARANCE" REPORT SINCE THE MAY 12 ABDUCTION OF SIX YOUNG PEOPLE (BUENOS AIRES 4082). MIGUEL ANGEL DE NICHILLO WAS "SURFACED" BY POLICE AUTHORITIES THREE DAYS AFTER HIS JULY 14 APPARENT ABDUCTION OR ARREST WAS PUBLICIZED BY THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD ON JULY 21--A FACT WE BELIEVE MAY DEMONSTRATE A SENSITIVITY TO A MEDIA-REPORTED DISAPPEARANCE SELDOM SHOWN. (DETAILS OF THE DE NICHILLO DISAPPEARANCE-REAPPEARANCE ARE SENT IN THE WEEKLY HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDUP OF JULY 26. THE CASE MAY YET TURN OUT TO BE A ROUTINE POLICE MATTER.)

4. THE DISAPPEARED. NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON ACCOUNTING FOR THE DISAPPEARED; THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO SIGNAL THAT THERE WILL BE NO ACCOUNTING. GENERAL VIOLA'S MAY 29 ARMY DAY SPEECH, THE MOST RECENT AND MOST AUTHORITATIVE PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT, BROADLY INTIMATED THAT THE DISAPPEARED COULD BE EQUATED WITH THE "ABSENT FOREVER" ("LOS AUSENTES PARA SIEMPRE"). WE CONTINUE TO HEAR OF PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH FAMILIES HELD BY THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR'S COL. SAN ROMAN, WHOSE JOB IT IS TO DEAL IN MATTERS HAVING TO DO WITH THE IMPRISONED AND DISAPPEARED, IN WHICH THE COLONEL VIRTUALLY WRITES OFF ANY CHANCES THAT PERSONS WHO DISAPPEARED DURING 1976 AND MOST OF 1977 WILL EVER BE HEARD FROM AGAIN. SAN ROMAN DOES, HOWEVER, GIVE TANTALIZING STATEMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT PERHAPS MANY OF THE 1978 DISAPPEARANCES MIGHT STILL TURN UP ALIVE.

5. THERE ARE STILL TWO PARTICULARLY DISTURBING ELEMENTS HAVING TO DO WITH THE DISAPPEARED:
--THE EMBASSY HAS INCREASINGLY CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT WITHIN SOME GOA AGENCIES RECORDS DO EXIST OF THE DEATHS OF SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF THE DISAPPEARED. FAILURE TO

MAKE AT LEAST A PARTIAL ACCOUNTING IS WITHOUT DOUBT DELIBERATELY MADE POLICY DECISION OF THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, NOT A DECISION TAKEN BECAUSE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE. AGAIN QUOTING SAN ROMAN, THIS TIME FROM A CONVERSATION HE HAD WITH A DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE, "WE KNOW WHO IS DEAD, BUT SAYING THIS TO ANYONE IS IMPOSSIBLE. SO MANY OFFICERS--INCLUDING MANY YOUNG ONES WHOSE CAREERS ARE AHEAD OF THEM--SIMPLY MUST BE PROTECTED AGAINST REPRISALS AT SOME FUTURE DATE." DISTURBING TOO IS FRAGMENTARY--BUT CREDIBLE--EVIDENCE THAT SOME SCATTERED CLANDESTINE DETENTION CENTERS STILL EXIST, ALTHOUGH SMALL, EACH HOLDING NO MORE THAN PERHAPS 25 PRISONERS. THIS DOES NOT ALTER CONCLUSIONS OF THE EMBASSY REGARDING CLANDESTINE CENTERS (SEE BUENOS AIRES 3056), BUT IT IS DISMAYING TO REPORT THAT THEY HAVE NOT YET BEEN COMPLETELY ELIMINATED. ON THE OTHER HAND THE SAME ARGENTINE SOURCES WHO HAVE REPORTED THE CENTERS--PEOPLE CLOSE TO THE SECURITY SERVICES--ALSO ASSURE US THAT THE CENTERS WILL BE CLOSED BEFORE THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ARRIVES HERE IN EARLY SEPTEMBER. THERE IS INFORMED SPECULATION THAT SOME OF THE REMAINING CLANDESTINE PRISONERS ARE BEING MURDERED.

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MURDERS

6. PEN PRISONERS. WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY MARGUINDEGUY'S ATTEMPTING (ON JUNE 29, SEE BUENOS AIRES 5450), TO SET OUT THE CORRECT NUMBER OF PEN PRISONERS, AND ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM IS BEING SPEEDED UP AND LARGER NUMBERS OF PERSONS SIMPLY RELEASED. THIS BEARS OUT REPORTS WE HAD EARLIER THAT THE COMMISSION WHICH CONSIDERS THE FATE OF PRISONERS HAD CHANGED ITS GROUND RULES IN ORDER TO OVERCOME SOME ZONE COMMANDERS' OBJECTIONS TO THE RELEASE OR THE OPTION OF AN INDIVIDUAL. THE SUBSEQUENT REARRESTS OF FIVE OR SIX FORMER PEN PRISONERS BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES IN RESISTENCIA PROVES THAT TARNY COMMANDERS ARE NOT PREPARED TO LIE STILL FOR THE COMMISSION'S DECISIONS. SO DO SEVERAL OPTION CASES WHICH APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION (AND INFORMATION PASSED ON TO THIS EMBASSY OR TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR OUR ENCOURAGEMENT) AND LATER RENEGED--WE SPECULATE BECAUSE ZONE COMMANDERS COMPLAINED TOO BITTERLY OR EXERTED TOO MUCH PRESSURE AT HAVING BEEN BYPASSED OR IGNORED.

REARRESTS
AND
DENIAL
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7. NOW REPRESSION IS HANDLED. THERE IS A "DOCTRINE" DISCUSSION GOING ON WITHIN THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. EVIDENCE OF THIS WAS GIVEN JUNE 8-9 WHEN GENERAL SUAREZ MASON REPORTEDLY PRESENTED A HARDLINE PLAN FOR COMBATING THE NEW FACE OF SUBVERSION TO THE MILITARY JUNTA. THE

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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Declassify: (X) In Part () In Full

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Date 5/31/01 Declassify on 5/31/11 Reason 25X6

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INFO OCT-01 10-14 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6150

BIZARRE SUBSEQUENT EVENTS IN WHICH SUAREZ MASON WAS REPORTED TO HAVE EXPLAINED THIS DOCTRINE BEFORE ARGENTINE SENIOR DIPLOMATS AND HIS APPEARANCE BEFORE THEM THEN SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED DOES NOT OBSCURE THE FACT THAT TWO OF SUAREZ MASON'S COLONELS ACTUALLY DID, WE BELIEVE, ESPOUSE THE LINE REPORTED AND THE FACT THAT THE GENERAL IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT HE SYMPATHIZED WITH THE HARD, WITCH HUNTING LINE REPORTED. NO KINDER DESCRIPTION CAN BE ADMITTED. THERE ARE COUNTERVAILING REPORTS THAT MUCH STRICTER CONTROL OVER THE REPRESSION IS TO BE EXERTED. A DRAFT OF THESE NEW RULES IS BEING SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL OF THE ARMY COMMANDER AND, PRESUMABLY, THE JUNTA.

8. PRISONS.

AND OUR OWN OBSERVATIONS BASED UPON VISITS TO INTERVIEW RIGHT OF OPTION CANDIDATES CONFIRM IMPROVEMENT IN PRISON CONDITIONS. ALTHOUGH WE WERE PERTURBED BY GENERAL HARGUINDEGUY'S JUNE 29 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT PEN PRISONERS BECAUSE THEY CREATE AS MANY QUESTIONS AS THEY ANSWER, WE REMAIN CERTAIN THAT A PEN POPULATION DIMINISHED TO 1,723 DOES IN FACT INDICATE SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER POLITICAL PRISONERS.

9. ARGENTINE OPINION WAS ALARMED TO READ IN SEVERAL BUENOS AIRES NEWSPAPERS ON JULY 23 THAT MARIO FIRMENICH WAS REPORTED IN NICARAGUA, HELPING THE SANDINISTAS TO WIN. FERNANDO VACA NARVACA, ANOTHER MONTONERO TERRORIST, WAS REPORTED THERE WITH HIM. BOTH WERE INVOLVED IN THE GROTESQUE "PEOPLE'S TRIAL" AND MURDER OF FORMER PRESIDENT ARAMBURU IN 1970, AND IN SUBSEQUENT FLAUNTING OF THEIR CRIME IN THE PRESS.) FIRMENICH, THE REPORT CONTINUES, ALSO PLANS A MAJOR MONTONERO CAMPAIGN BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR. THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S INTENSE CONCERN OVER EVENTS IN NICARAGUA BECOMES MORE POIGNANT. THIS IS THE KIND OF THING THAT GIVES COURAGE TO THE SUAREZ MASON'S OF THIS PART OF THE WORLD, WHO USE SUCH CHALLENGES TO JUSTIFY THEIR OWN EXTREME RESPONSES. IT MAY BODE ILL ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRONT.
CASTRO

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